

CTE Industry Credential Data Collection

April 28, 2016 Transcript

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Virginia Department of Education Industry Credentialing Data Collection video streaming session. Today's session is designed to assist local school divisions in identifying and reporting accurate data that will ultimately be a part of the Local School Division school report card. Joining me today is Mark Burnett who is the CTE data specialist, and between the two of us, we have prepared a video streaming session that we believe will assist you in your local reporting. Today's agenda will focus on six key points associated with the data collection for industry credentialing. We will provide an overview of Virginias' credentialing system, the types of industry credentials, reporting procedures, data verification, procedures for ensuring accuracy, the impact of this data pertaining to the school report card, and references and assistance that will help you during the course of the year.

[00:01:28] There are four key types of industry credentials. The first one is a full industry credential and essentially that's a credential that is recognized by industry, a trade organization, professional association, and is validated based on industry standards. Such credentials include A+ CompTIA, Microsoft Certified Professional, and there are hundreds of others that are in that full industry credentialing category. The second is Pathway Industry Credentials which may consist of entry level exams as a component of a larger credential that is also recognized by industry. Automotive servicing with ASE would be one of those where there are seven different sub-credentials within that particular pathway. Third is occupational competency assessments and those are nationally standardized assessments of knowledge and skill in a specific career and/or technical area such as those that are offered by NOCTI or SkillsUSA. They measure competencies uniquely different than those that are full industry credentials. And then fourth are those state-issued professional licenses, those credentials that require a state-level examination and the insurance of a license, such as an LPN or a Registered Nurse.

[00:03:28] The purpose of reporting has four key components. One, the school report card for responsible schools in terms of accountability and responsible school is a term Mark, that during the course of this presentation I would like for you to speak to. And then secondly Annual Performance report for serving schools. There is a unique difference between the responsible school and the serving school. And then the data analysis report which is also known as the DAR. That is a school-level report, a high school level report. And then from the context of accountability, program improvement is a key component of this data collection process associated with industry credentials.

[00:04:35] Thank you George. The process this year for the data collection steps is unchanged from last year in many respects. The data must be submitted between the time periods between May 1st and July 31st. For most of the school divisions, credential information is held in a student information system in paired to a student's state testing identifier. The students STI should be verified for accuracy before the last day of school. Regional centers must report credential information to the student's home school or responsible school in order for this data to be reported. Regional centers should verify the accuracy of this data reported on their behalf by the responsible school division. Many student information systems will export a file that can be used in the CTEC credential collection data submission process. The correctness of this file will affect the accuracy of the data entry that's being performed by your schools this spring. The data extract used in last year submission can be reviewed and compared to the record layout from your local data system for this year. The record layout has the data fields that must be collected from the students who are taking the external tests.

[00:06:05] Here is a sample of a data file format and it has a lot of the relevant information. Now for some divisions, this would be constructed by your information management staff directly, or this may be an extract that comes from your student information system. But it does have some of the relevant information relating to the data, such as a student's STI, their responsible school number, the course that they are taking, the credential number, their pass or fail, and the cost of the particular exam. This layout, which was in the previous slide sample, is a text file with no blank spaces or extra tabs. The file has four parts: there's the header; the A record, which there is one of; the B

records which should have an entry for each credential attempt that has been taken by student; and then finally a record count. We should show a count of all the A and B records, so you can actually physically go through those records and count them to verify that the record count field is accurate. You can review page 22 of the CTERS User's Manual for more details on the specification.

[00:07:28] For some school divisions, after this file has been created, there may be some minor edits that need to be made. There are data files that can be corrected using a text editor. Some examples of these are Notepad++ for Windows, or BBEdit for the Mac, or any other text editor that provides line numbering. We discourage use of editors like word or Excel because they sometimes can introduce hidden characters and tabs that may corrupt the file format before submission. You should look in this file for typos, blank lines and spaces, and review the data submission error messages. So as you submit a data file, if error messages come back, review those and make corrections to your file accordingly. Repost this data with the corrections to overwrite the previous data submission. Each submission completely erases the prior submission and starts you over again. Remember that the Workplace Readiness Skills, just as it was last year, should not be included in this data submission. So the WRS is reported by C-TECS directly to VDOE in the late summer. Many reports reflect that once that becomes part of it.

[00:08:54] Here's a reminder concerning the Workplace Readiness Skills extended testing schedule, Superintendents Memo 015-16, January 22, 2016 announced that the Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment Commonwealth test has an extended testing schedule. And this optional testing schedule will be available through July 31, which you will remember from my earlier slide is the date of final submission due date for all tests to be submitted. Even though a course was valid in last year's file, it may have been a course that is no longer current, so please check for accuracy the state course codes and exam codes that they're valid for the current school year. Once this data has been completely validated and has had a successful submission, you can then go through and review some of these reports in the SSWS Reports section of the credential collection data application. Some of the important reports for you to look through, the school report card for industry credentials earned and occupational assessments passed by students is available for all students who have taken a credential as well as the credentialing student data by CTE course. It's a good way to find credentials broken down by the courses that they took.

[00:10:33] For CTE completers which will be a subset of your data submission, the CTE completer testing rates will be available once the end-of-year student record collection has been submitted. So until the completer demographic report has been completed and the CTE completers are identified, this report will not be available to you. They should be available about the same time in the beginning of August. Check for consistencies. Resubmit your files needed to overwrite files if you have any errors on the reports. Look for things that might look irregular such as an ASVAB exam being paired with a course other than Military Science. Remember again the Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth test should not be included in the data submission. Some of the reference materials that you should have at your disposal is a CTERS User's Manual which I referred to earlier with the data specification and it does have details on the submission process. It has the procedures for this and the appendix in the back of the CTERS manual has all the valid course codes to be used and paired with the credential exam numbers.

[00:12:00] Thank you Mark for an excellent presentation. Give us a couple of examples of a responsible school and a serving school. Thank you George. Yes, a responsible school is typically what is referred to by the school divisions as the home school, where the students take their academic courses, where they usually graduate. That is where they report most of the data for several collections, like the student record collections and this, the credential collection. A serving school however, is where a student receives services in CTE so that would be where they take a course in Career and Technical Education. Regional CTE centers, local CTE centers, Governors and Health Science Academies all fall into the category of a serving school. Those schools don't directly report information for the credential collection, however they are responsible to make sure that the information on credentialing taken from their school and by their students is reported back to the reporting school. There should be a validation process that the serving school has with the reporting school to make sure that the information is entered into the system correctly, it shows up in the reports accurately, and that step has to be redone at each data submission. So anytime the data is resubmitted, this validation step must be taken between these two schools. So a good relationship between the responsible school and the serving school is very important in the data collection process.

[00:14:03] I understand from what you are saying, that the original center would be a serving school. Is it possible in a comprehensive high school that that high school is the responsible school and also the serving school? There may be cases where a CTE programs are going on within a high school for example. Those, of course, would have the responsible school designated for that student and the serving school as the same school. But for many students, they are taking their academic programs at one school and maybe receiving CTE program instruction at another location or another school within that same school in some cases. Give us some examples of how Governor's STEM Academies and Governor's Health Science Academies would report credentialing data. That's a good example. A lot of times, a Governor's STEM Academy may exist within the actual physical building of a high school but they have their own unique program where they actually exist within a regional center. It's their responsibility to take the credentials earned by their students in that STEM Academy or Health Science Academy and provide them to the responsible school who do the reporting process for them. So it's much the same as a regional center or a local technical center.

[00:15:39] Mark, you work with school divisions across the Commonwealth and respond to questions on a daily basis. What are two or three of the common questions or problems that school division's seek assistance in providing accurate data. Yes, both for Gordon Creasey over the years and myself, a lot of the calls that we get from the school divisions relate to the data file submission process. As the Student Information Systems across the state have improved there's been fewer of these as that data has gotten better. But often the actual editing process has introduced errors into the data report and so they call in for help and assistance in taking a look at those files. If you need our assistance in doing that we're certainly open and welcome any assistance we can offer with that particular step. Some of the other problems that we've come across are in the use of incorrect or inappropriate course codes, ones that may have been from a course that was discontinued. So those sometimes introduced errors into the data collection process. We want to make sure that your course codes and your exam credential numbers align so that you can get accurate information about your programs in the school division.

[00:17:16] In the very early days of reporting data, programs or software such as Word and Excel were commonly used to edit data. Earlier in the presentation you mentioned other tools that might be more efficient in that process today and would you speak again to that. Yes, when you work with Excel and Word, of course, you would need to export them back to a text file format, and the text file format is key to this process. You cannot have any hidden characters, any tabs or spaces or empty lines in that. And very often Excel will inadvertently introduce those as will Word. Converting them back to a text file is not always a clean process. And that way that's the reason that many of the information management group members of the local school divisions have used sophisticated data text editor because they do the process without introducing that kind of error. It makes it a lot easier on you when you don't have to trace down invisible things in the data file itself, and that's one of the reasons we encourage that if you're doing editing of that file after it's been extracted from your data system. Of course, the best solution is to always have your data accurate in your student information system from the start, then you don't have to do any of that editing afterwards. That way the data is correct in both the local system and in the data extract that you're submitting to the VDOE.

[00:19:02] Mark, thanks again. We appreciate all that you do every day. You're in a very critical role in terms of our accountability pertaining to data. When we really look at the impact of this data reporting, Virginia's success in terms of credentialing has been phenomenal. This grid shows the success of credentialing tests in those four major types of credentialing, and you can just look, for example, at the gray bar in 2010-11 where there was 36,719 students that earned credentials. And then you look out at 2014-15 and 128,850 students earned credentials. That's really heavy lifting for local school divisions and also demonstrates that the type of instructional programs that are taking place for students. This slide we affectionately called the staircase, but again it illustrates that growth between 2010-11 and 2014-15. We hope that school divisions will continue to place a significant focus on credentialing. It's really important that students graduate with a diploma, but also with industry credentials that provide evidence of their skills and knowledge base that they've gained in a technical area. And in summary, conducting a thorough review of all data in your school division's information system before submission will provide all stakeholders with accurate data for funding allocations decision-making, and to show the public a report card of the success that your school division is having. Early validation of your data will ensure accuracy when producing reports.

[00:21:41] We would encourage you to contact Mark if you have questions. His phone number and email addresses are listed here. And again, Mark, thank you for the work that you do every day and assistance provided to local school divisions across the state. We would ask that everyone would take a couple of minutes to complete the survey. We value the feedback that you give us and we use that in our efforts to continually improve the professional development that is provided to local administrators throughout the year. Please have an enjoyable spring and we trust that your closing of school this year will be successful and that the data you submit will indeed be accurate. Good evening.